# The Middlebury Campus

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## COLLEGE-SPONSORED TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE TALK RECEIVES BACKLASH, INSPIRES ALTERNATIVE EVENTS

**By LUKE POWER & THIE HARTHONO**
*News Editor & Contributing Writer*

STEVE JAMES / ADDISON INDEPENDENT

*Students gathered outside of McCullough Student Center last Thursday to protest and celebrate transgender joy before heading to the talk in Dana.*

COURTESY PHOTO / THE HAMILTON FORUM

*Brianna Wu and Leo Sapir spoke on Thursday in Wilson Hall about their concerns over the state of transgender healthcare in the U.S.*

Middlebury hosted a talk attended by about 120 students on Feb. 20 titled "What is the Right Approach on Public Policy and Transgender Medicine?" in Wilson Hall in McCullough Student Center. The talk featured two speakers invited by the Alexander Hamilton Forum: Leor Sapir of the Manhattan Institute and Brianna Wu, a transgender activist and executive director of the Rebellion PAC. Both speakers maintain an active presence on social media, where Sapir and Wu have previously criticized current transgender healthcare in the U.S.

The speakers' online rhetoric surrounding the issue led student groups and members of the community to question the speakers' qualifications to speak about the topic, criticizing the college's decision to hold the event. The talk took place only a few weeks after President Trump's executive orders banned transgender women from women's sports and mandated the recognition of only two sexes, leaving the transgender community and its supporters particularly worried about protecting their rights to free expression and healthcare.

In response to the planned event, the student group Queers & Allies organized a counter-panel at the same time in Dana Auditorium called "Trans Healthcare is NOT a Debate!" that was moderated by Elio Farley '24.5 and Zoe Predmore '27.5. Their event featured local pediatrician Paco Corbalan, Director of Middlebury Health Services Alison Finch, Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies Laurie Essig and transgender student-athlete Leah Smith to discuss the current politicization of transgender healthcare.

Half an hour before the alternative event, the organizers held a "Trans Joy Dance Party" outside of McCullough in celebration of queer joy and in protest of the panel before dancing in a conga line across campus to hear the speakers in Dana.

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## *Animal rights group files complaint over Middlebury's violations of animal research procedures this fall*

PHOEBE AN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

*BiHall is home to multiple animal research projects in the vivarium, which reportedly violated animal welfare protocols last September.*

**By ASA STONE**
*Staff Writer*

The animal rights group Stop Animal Exploitation NOW! (SAEN) released a complaint last month alleging violations of animal welfare procedures this past fall in BiHall's Vivarium, the center for laboratory animal research on campus. In its complaint, the organization published a report filed on Nov. 19, 2024 with the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) alleging Middlebury's research team's failures to comply with surgical procedural requirements, feeding schedules and laboratory safety protocols.

The concerns about multiple incidents throughout the month of September were initially reported by phone to the NIH on Oct. 31, 2024, prompting the official report filed and signed by Associate Dean of the Sciences Rick Bunt and Clarissa Parker, chair of the college's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. As per Public Health Service (PHS) requirements, the report detailed multiple issues that had been identified as well as corrective actions implemented after the problems were identified.

"We took immediate corrective actions as soon as we observed these issues in our lab and proactively reported

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## Trump administration immigration policies pose uncertainty for international students

**By MAYA ALEXANDER & PHOEBE AN**
*Staff Writers*

Following President Donald Trump's re-election in November, many U.S. colleges and universities advised international students to return to campus before his inauguration. Since Trump took office, he has begun to execute his promise to enact the largest deportation mission in U.S. history. Having seen how the government barred asylum, moved to end birthright citizenship and declared a national emergency at the U.S.-Mexico border, international students have expressed concern about the issues they may face re-entering the country to continue their studies and pursue careers after graduating.

On Feb. 21, 2025, Middlebury's International

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## TRUMP ADMINISTRATION BUDGET CUTS IMPACT JOB PROSPECTS FOR SENIORS

**By HUGO ZHANG & IVY TAN**
*News Editor & Contributing Writer*

COURTESY PHOTO / DOUG COPELAND

*Students concerned about their career fields of interests being defunded in the wake of recent executive orders are looking to the Center for Carrer and Internships (CCI) for guidance.*

Since President Trump's return to the White House on Jan. 20, he has signed several executive orders that have significantly impacted the U.S. job market. These include the establishment of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), funding cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the long-term hold on all international aid and development activities, impacting both the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the State Department.

Although the ultimate implementation of these executive orders may be challenged in court, Trump's actions have inevitably created uncertainty and concern in the post-graduate job market, particularly for Middlebury students seeking employment in the federal government, international development and the environmental and healthcare research fields.

At the Center for Careers and Internships (CCI), conversations on the impact of these changes for the Middlebury community are well underway. Ursula Olender, executive director of the CCI, mentioned in an interview with The Campus that the impact of President Trump's policies has not been fully presented yet.

"Things happen in the world that impact the job market," Olender said. "It's still really early days, so we're still assessing what impact it's going to have on our students."

Olender said she believes that the strength of the overall job market will mean that the specific effects of Trump Administration policies on the class of 2025 will be more indirect. "We were anticipating that this would be the strongest market since 2021," she said.

Despite this, Olender stated that some organizations and positions, such as AmeriCorps, Peace Corps and government consulting, would be vulnerable under President Trump's administration.

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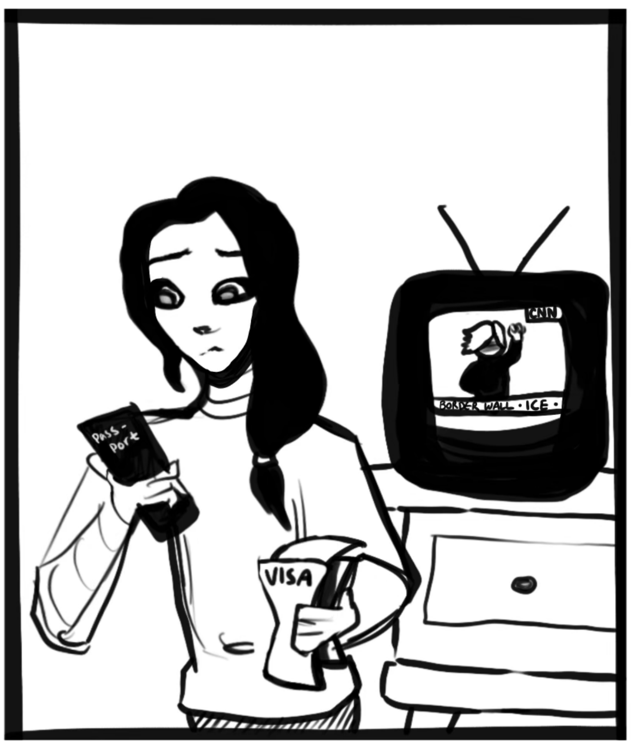
# Trump Administration immigration policies pose uncertainty for international students



MIA LEVINGS / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

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Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) sent a travel update to the college's international student community, mentioning that the office was continuing to attentively monitor immigration-related regulations and policies while noting that regulations related to international students in the U.S. have not changed yet.

Despite their reassurances, the email addressed recent news stories concerning Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and Trump's executive order, "Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats."

Stating that the U.S. government has raised its activity around verifying immigration statuses, the office instructed foreign nationals — which includes both non-U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents — to carry government-issued evidence of their immigration status along with their personal identification and immigration or travel documents.

The office also included a warning for international students regarding their right to protest.

"Based on our understanding of the executive order, it is important for individuals who are part of the international community to know that protesting for causes that are considered to "harm the security, economic, political, cultural or other national interests of the United States" or that are viewed as "anti-Semitic" may have implications on their immigration status and ability to remain in the United States," the ISSS update stated.

The office further clarified that it did not have control over what activity the federal government designated as a violation of its new policy on protesting.

These policies targeting international students align with those of the previous Trump administration, which limited student visas by enforcing stricter visa terms and more rigorous vetting of OPT and H-1B student employment programs.

Concern over international student's status has emerged from Trump's repeated statements about combating antisemitic harassment and violence by canceling the student visas of people he has called "Hamas sympathizers" on college campuses. International students have said that Trump's actions have made them reconsider their participation in activism on their college campuses.

One student who requested to remain anonymous said they have engaged with the college Board of Trustees as a representative of Middlebury Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) in its recent divestment campaign. The student shared their concerns of political retaliation for their activism.

"Going forward, I don't think I will feel comfortable representing the student organizers for SJP in front of the Board of Trustees because my name will potentially be on those records… Even though it is unlikely that the Trump Administration will pursue actions against SJP, if they do, the college may be obliged to disclose those records," they said.

While they emphasized that they believed their citizenship in a Western country lessened the likelihood of political retribution, they are particularly concerned about the potential for the administration to utilize records to achieve retribution against specific individuals.

Beyond fears of political retaliation within the U.S., international students also shared concerns about being unable to exit and re-enter the country easily. An international student from Iraq who asked to remain anonymous was unable to return home during their first year and a half at Middlebury.

"Coming from one of the few countries where the U.S. doesn't grant the standard four-year F-1 visa, I'm issued a one-year visa at a time. This makes traveling home difficult because it requires careful planning, visa appointment scheduling, and a lot of uncertainty about whether I'd be allowed to return," they wrote in an email to The Campus.

When asked about their ability to engage in activities or programs that other American students could do without concern, the student said that being an international student undoubtedly comes with limitations.

"I wasn't able to study abroad because it would've complicated my visa situation. Freedom of expression is also more limited, as any opinions or actions we take could potentially fall under subjective rules that might jeopardize our status in the U.S., especially given the zero-tolerance policy that the government has towards international students," they said.

# SNOW PLOWS, SALT AND STEAMED SPINACH: MIDDLEBURY STAFF TACKLES WINTER STORM

RYAN MCELROY / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

*Members of facilities services set out to plow the over 12 inches of snow Middlebury received last weekend.*

**By SAM LUEKE**
*Contributing Writer*

If there is one thing that makes going to school in Vermont unique, it is that almost nothing, not even a foot of snow, can stop students and professors from going to class. Last Sunday and Monday, Middlebury received over 12 inches of snow, but students and community members still needed to eat, attend class and commute to work. Staff members are the force behind the curtain that allow Middlebury to carry out its typical routines even in the wake of a major snowstorm.

Behind the Facilities Services building, a fleet of snowblowers, shovels and Gators wait for battle. Luther Tenny, the director of Facilities Services for the college, let The Campus in on the logistics.

"One plow operator has a set of buildings that they're responsible for. They plow the same thing storm after storm, that way they know where the fire hydrants are, how to plow the snow so it's not blocking entry into parking lots, that sort of thing," Tenny said.

Tenny estimated that about 300 tons of salt are used on the streets on campus each winter, in addition to several thousand tons in town.

The snow plowers weren't the only staff members working overtime. Due to weather-related call-outs, Proctor Dining Hall needed to make some adjustments. The upper level was closed over the weekend to reduce the amount of necessary cleaning, and disposable plates and cutlery instead of ceramic dishes and metal silverware were used to lighten the load on the dish-cleaning staff.

Chris Laframboise, a dining services chef at Proctor Dining Hall, shared some strategies for keeping things moving while understaffed.

"If it was gonna be a sauté, we might steam it. If we were to grill something, that's a body on the grill. But if we can bake it, that frees up a body that can do a little bit more stuff," he said.

Laframboise recounted the commuting challenges of staff members coming to work during the harsh weather conditions.

"One of my bakers was driving in at five in the morning, and she got stranded in a snowbank for an hour. When you're coming in that early, a lot of stuff isn't plowed, and snowdrifts can be dangerous because you don't know how deep or wide they are," he said.

Despite the challenges, Tenny said that this winter is more typical for Vermont than the last few years have been.

"I grew up in Vermont, and I would say this is more of a historical average winter," he said.

The more noticeable aspect of climate change, according to Tenny, is the frequent fluctuations. Freeze-thaw cycles have become more common throughout the season, as the temperatures are less stable.

"The biggest challenge we have is it warms up during the day, the sidewalks get wet, and then when the sun sets, those wet sidewalks freeze back over. That leads to very slippery conditions in the evenings," he said.

After the storm, many students found their parking spaces and cars buried under the snow. Though using empty faculty spaces may seem like a quick fix, this can pose some issues and was a hot topic at the February faculty meeting.

Professor of Film and Media Studies and Faculty Council Chair Jason Mittell described the faculty's concerns in an email to The Campus.

"Most faculty and staff drive to work, as we live too far to walk to campus, and many of us have kids to pick up from school or other commitments in the community – thus parking fairly close to our offices is important," he wrote.

Tenny's advice? Buy a shovel.

"In this storm, the biggest issue we had was students trying to pull out of parking spaces without shoveling their cars out first, and getting stuck halfway out," Tenny said. "Once they get stuck partway, we can't get a plow truck around them."

Amidst the challenges of surviving in a bitter winter climate, cozy memories are made too. For a few cold mornings each year, Facilities Services workers gather together, eat and relax. Laframboise spoke about hosting the facilities crew for a warm Proctor breakfast.

"I was taking out garbage and I saw a whole army of them out there in the cold cleaning off the deck. That's a brutal job. So, coming in and getting a nice hot breakfast, drink, whatever — that's important. We're all one community," he said.

*Editor's Note: Professor of Film & Media Culture Jason Mittel is the faculty advisor of The Campus. He had no involvement in the publication of this article.*

# College-sponsored transgender healthcare talk receives backlash, inspires second talk

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Farley and Predmore described the alternative panel as a way to explicitly support transgender students and counter-program Wu and Sapir's discussion. The moderators expressed their belief that Sapir and Wu were unqualified to be speaking about transgender healthcare, and could be spreading harmful information.

"Middlebury College does not need to platform pseudoscience. It doesn't platform flat earthers or anti-vaxxers," Farley and Predmore said in a joint statement at the event.

Associate Professor of Political Science Gary Winslett, who chose Sapir and Wu to speak, explained his decision to invite the speakers in his introduction to the talk.

"If you're a political science professor like I am, you're trying to educate your students and you want them to hear these different viewpoints that are out in the world," he said.

When asked how he felt about the counter-panel taking place at the same time as the one he organized, Winslett said he had no qualms with them hosting another event discussing the topic of transgender healthcare.

"I have zero problem with that. It's a 'more speech' approach and it didn't disrupt anything," Winslett wrote to The Campus.

At the panel in Wilson, Sapir and Wu discussed what they see as shortcomings in gender-affirming healthcare in the U.S.

Sapir claimed that there is not enough evidence to demonstrate the safety of puberty blockers or other forms of gender-affirming care for minors. He pointed towards recent reversals of gender policy in "progressive" countries like the United Kingdom, Finland and Sweden, which have imposed restrictions on gender-affirming treatments.

"U.S. medical groups are out of date, meaning they don't recognize what the science is, what it does or does not say, or, they do recognize it but are not being honest with the public," Sapir said.

Wu agreed, but also pushed back.

"There are serious problems with the way this healthcare is delivered today," Wu said. "It goes both ways though; there is not strong evidence that [gender-affirming healthcare] helps, but there is not strong evidence that it hurts."

Sapir countered by discussing what he called the potential harms of puberty blockers, including sterility, sexual dysfunction and osteoporosis.

"There is now emerging evidence that puberty blockers result in cognitive impairment," he said.

Wu agreed with Sapir on this point. "We don't have to do puberty blockers. We can let a child develop and if their gender identity [is] stable at 14… we can just start [giving them] antiandrogens, estrogen, and give the surgeon enough material [developed sexual organs] to work with," Wu said.

Wu, a transgender woman, attributes her successful transition to the strict "standards of care" in place at the time of her transition. These protocols included months of therapy before any medical treatment and a period during which she was required to work a job and live as a woman before her surgical procedures.

"I had real-life experience. I had to go make actual girl friends in the real world and figure out how girls socialize with each other, which — I don't have to tell any of y'all — it's tough," Wu said. "I think we are cheating trans people because all of that's just been destroyed…I could take anyone here today to Planned Parenthood Massachusetts, and get you started on HRT [hormone replacement therapy]. The clinical safeguarding is gone."

A student briefly interrupted the event by playing a trumpet and harmonica before being led out, but otherwise the event proceeded unimpeded.

Audience reactions to Wu and Sapir's talk in Wilson varied.

"I thought the rhetoric was a little too charged to have a productive conversation. I wish it was a little more dispassionate," David Gross '25 said.

Professor of Political Science Murray Dry said he was happy to see open discourse about a controversial topic.

"This doesn't occur often. They were knowledgeable and they understood and respected one another despite their differences," he said.

Meanwhile, at the event in Dana, which drew in about 100 attendees from both the local area and college, panelists spoke to their own experiences with transgender healthcare.

The conversation touched on Sapir and Wu's talk, but mostly focused on access to healthcare and how federal actions could potentially curtail it.

"For now, the practicality of what we're offering and the services that we can provide… in Vermont has not changed, like we can still do all the things we could do before January 20th. What has changed is that we're doing it in an environment of fear and uncertainty," said Corbalan, the local pediatrician.

Panelists also discussed what they believe to be a right-wing effort to demonize transgender people, using Sapir and Wu's talk as an example. They focused on shared perceptions of rising anti-transgender rhetoric and policies that impact transgender collegiate athletes like Smith, who acknowledged that new reality but shared that there is a strong support network for transgender individuals at Middlebury.

"Know that there are people in your community that are here for you and care about you," she said.

Finch, the health services director, added to Smith's points. "We want to see you. We're a welcoming place, and that's what I'm here for. It's the most important thing that we offer," she said.

Sydney Rogers '25 was impressed with the discussion at the Dana panel.

"I thought it was very well organized and impactful. I felt like it was in touch with the student body and that they brought in a very knowledgeable panel that was able to speak from a broad range of experiences and perspectives," she said in an interview with The Campus.

Essig, the Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies professor who spoke at the counter-talk, argued that colleges should have a role in limiting campus speech.

"Colleges have a particular obligation that isn't the same as if you want to put a soap box up… everybody has to socialize together. They have to be in classes together, and I do believe that universities have a special obligation," she said.

*Editor's Note: Senior News Editor Maggie Bryan '25 contributed reporting to this article.*

STEVE JAMES / ADDISON INDEPENDENT

*After the dance party outside McCullough, students marched in a congo line to the alternative talk on transgender healthcare talk in Dana.*

ELIO FARLEY / COURTESY PHOTO

*The panel in Dana, where several speakers touched on the politicization of transgender healthcare in the U.S.*

# TRUMP ADMINISTRATION BUDGET CUTS IMPACT JOB PROSPECTS FOR SENIORS

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"I haven't heard definitively, but my bet is that funding to them will be hit," she said. "So students who are looking for those types of opportunities might be impacted."

Julia Roth '25 echoed these concerns about the impact of the current uncertainty.

"I have friends who are on the AmeriCorps programs that have had lots of budget cuts," Roth said in an interview with The Campus. "I can imagine that programs like those would be impacted."

Other fellowship programs have already seen cancellations or rollbacks. Roth applied to the Coro Fellowship in Public Affairs, but received an email notifying her that the fellowship had been canceled. Whether or not the cancellation is related to budget cuts is difficult to pinpoint, but Roth said she suspects there could be a link. The email came the same week that several news sources reported federal cuts in funding to nonprofits, and thousands of people lost their jobs due to Trump's termination of USAID positions.

"I think people are kind of disheartened as they want to do a job that helps people but positions are fewer than a few years ago," Roth said.

Olender also mentioned that positions in healthcare and academic research, including admission to graduate schools, might be influenced as NIH and NSF funding is cut. Several universities have already announced plans to freeze or rescind graduate school admissions in the wake of dramatic losses in funding.

"We have a pretty large group of students who take positions in clinical research, and some of that funding is coming through grants provided by the federal government," she said.

Regarding public sector job cuts resulting from Trump's emphasis on government efficiency, Olender shared that Middlebury students may not be as significantly impacted as they think — she said that only approximately seven percent of Middlebury students have gone into government, law and policy in the last several years, and very few of that seven percent have federal jobs.

For people who worried that unemployment among federal workers will worsen the overall job market, Olender was not pessimistic for college students.

"Federal [civilian] employees only account for about 2% of America's workforce," she said. "Most of these folks are older workers, and may not have as much of an impact on entry-level hiring. Many of the federal employers who have lost their jobs are more likely middle managers and senior level staff as opposed to entry."

Although Middlebury has a global reputation for international studies, language instruction and environmental studies, these fields may be affected by Trump's neglect of international development and sustainability as well as his policy preference for imposing tariffs on foreign products.

"I'm a bit more worried about our graduate [MIIS] students than our undergraduates," Olender said. She expects some hiring freezes for some foreign language jobs, many of which can be found at companies which receive large government contracts and are now threatened with cuts.

Lily McGovern '25, an environmental policy major and global health minor, shared that her job search in environmental sustainability is now more difficult under the new administration.

"A lot of people that I've been able to talk to and a lot of their colleagues are being fired or their programs are losing funding," McGovern said in an interview with The Campus, sharing her networking experience. "They're just really not looking to hire anyone out of college because they're really focused on protecting people that are already at their company as much as possible."

McGovern said she is now looking for job opportunities in different fields due to concern over a declining market.

"I also study global health, so public health is also kind of deteriorating," she said, in reference to the recent NIH funding cuts. "Now I'm looking at broader research positions or looking at working in the Senate as an intern and just having a broader range of responsibilities just because that specific training that can be applied elsewhere isn't really feasibly being applied in the environmental space anymore."

To adapt to the new situation under the new administration, Olender suggested students explore their interests further, stay up to date on global hiring trends and actively work with career advisors at the CCI.

"We're a global institution, and we have connections, alumni, and parents all over the world," Olender said, highlighting Middlebury's effort to extend students' opportunities to the whole world. "We're just investing our energy into making sure that there are opportunities not only in the U.S., but in other places because we can't fix the U.S. federal government, but we can help our students find meaningful opportunities."

On top of that, Olender mentioned that CCI has over 40 funded summer internship opportunities for non-graduating students available on Handshake along with thousands of other internship opportunities.

"Keep in mind that the economy is still growing. This is a positive sign," she said. "So we all should remain vigilant and students should work closely with the CCI as they plan for internships, jobs, and further education."

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE / COURTESY PHOTO

*The Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest houses the enviornmental studies program. Students interested in work in the environmental science field may face challenges due to Trump's budget cuts.*

# ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP FILES COMPLAINT OVER MIDDLEBURY'S VIOLATIONS OF ANIMAL WELFARE PROCEDURES THIS FALL

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these concerns to the National Institutes of Health as a measure of transparency. The NIH has supported our plan and this matter is now resolved. The health and welfare of our animals is a top priority and we continue to be attentive to maintaining the highest standards of animal care," a college spokesperson wrote in the statement on the report, which was first reported by VTDigger last month.

Bunt and Parker declined to elaborate beyond the college's public statement. Laboratory and vivarium staff also declined an interview request from The Campus.

Professor of Biology Mark Spritzer, who conducts research in the vivarium with student assistants, said that the issues from the fall have been resolved, and he declined to give further information.

"Middlebury College has high standards of animal care, following all federal guidelines carefully. As an IACUC member, I am not inclined to provide details on an internal issue," Spritzer wrote in an email to The Campus.

Despite the college's stated compliance with all Public Health Service protocols, Michael Budkie, executive director of the animal rights group Stop Animal Exploitation NOW!, addressed the group's complaint to Middlebury College Interim President Steve Snyder on Jan. 20, 2025. His letter reiterated the mistakes that were made in the lab and described the relevant college employees as incompetent, then called for the termination of all staff members connected to the animal welfare violations this fall.

"I am contacting you today to insist that you take immediate action to terminate several Middlebury College staff who are responsible for multiple violations of federal regulations," Budkie wrote in his complaint to the college.

Among the problems addressed in the college's November report to the NIH were errors in rat surgical castration procedures, mix-ups in data reporting, confusion in post-operative care, the failure to remove sutures from animal subjects until 17 days after their surgery, improper water bottle and feed ration care, and misplacement of syringes and controlled substances.

"Due to the number of problems that have been identified over a short period of time, the following corrective actions are either in place now or are in the process of being completed," the report stated. Bunt and Parker proceeded to clarify that the faculty researchers and student assistants would retake animal welfare guideline courses, develop new training programs for students working with animals and restrictions on future animal surgical procedures.

"For a period of no less than one-year (thru 2025), students will not perform rodent surgeries in research directed by the [Principal Investigator]. This moratorium will allow students to focus more completely on animal care and welfare," the report states. Bunt and Walker also wrote that the principal researcher would now be required to visit the vivarium every morning and afternoon for one year to ensure compliance with student activities involving rats.

An anonymous student who has worked with live animal subjects at Middlebury prior to the recent incidents stated that while the report was troubling, the limited incidents do not reflect their training experience or the care they believe students provide for animals in the college's research.

"I would say the backlash feels a little embarrassing to be associated with it because it in no way reflects how research is done at the college," the student wrote in a message to The Campus. "Students undergo very serious training so it's shocking and upsetting that something like this happened but not a reflection of the vivarium research overall."

Although none of these incidents occurred on Public Health Service-funded projects, according to Bunt and Walker's report to the NIH, the agency's protocols require individuals to report any violations within institutions that receive funding from the federal government. Eligibility to conduct animal research requires research institutions to have Animal Welfare Assurance, necessitating the college to report any noncompliance issues that occur in the laboratory, according to Budkie.

According to the Public Health Service's Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, failure to comply with federal policy can result in various actions, including the termination of PHS service and funding.

According to Stop Animal Exploitation NOW!'s website, the animal rights group's goal is to expose the truth in order to end animal experimentation. The organization's complaints have mostly targeted large research universities such as Johns Hopkins University, MIT and Harvard University. In many cases, SAEN complaints have led to the permanent cancellation of research projects; Budkie told The Campus that his group successfully shut down nine research projects across the U.S. in the past two and a half years.

Although Budkie says cancellation of projects is a reasonable response, he also believes that the staff involved should be removed from the institution to prevent future issues. According to Budkie, Middlebury should follow suit by dismissing the employees responsible for the violations.

"The corrections they list are things they do internally so we cannot verify one way or another whether those actions were or were not taken," Budkie said in an interview with The Campus. "We do not feel that those corrections are anything that will necessarily prevent these kinds of occurrences from happening again."

The college did not address the issue of staffing in its written statement on the subject, only describing the reported violations as resolved internally in the college. Bunt and Parker's initial report did not call for the termination of any college employees or student research assistants.

The animal rights group's complaint comes a little over a year after staffing issues in the vivarium halted some research projects and left classes involving animal research struggling to replace the hands-on experience. College employees who worked with or in the vivarium reported being overworked and underpaid, which led to their departure for other research institutions. As of Feb. 25, all four staff positions in the vivarium are filled.

*Editor Maggie Bryan '25 contributed reporting to this article.*

# *"New-tella?" Dining Services reintroduces chocolate hazelnut spread, stainless steel to-go containers*

PHOEBE AN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

*The hazlenut spread, a replacement for Nutella, will only be offered in Proctor Dining Hall for the time being.*

**By KANAN CLIFFORD**
*Contributing Writer*

Last week, Middlebury College Dining Services introduced a new chocolate hazelnut spread to Proctor Dining Hall on a trial basis. The return of the fan-favorite food marks the first time the college has offered a chocolate hazelnut spread in dining halls since March 2023, when Dining Services removed Nutella due to inflation and environmental sustainability concerns over its production. The new spread is being introduced alongside other changes to the dining halls, including new to-go containers and new menu items.

Dan Detora, executive director of Food Operations at Middlebury, explained the new spread's limited availability in an email to The Campus. For the near future, the spread will only be offered in Proctor Dining Hall as Dining Services measures student demand for its new concoction.

Head Baker Brian Cashman is in charge of making the hazelnut spread each day, and he described the meticulous testing process that goes into perfecting the spread's recipe.

"Oftentimes we notice that the Nutella stiffens up once put out [in the dining hall], so I've been working with different chocolate-to-hazelnut ratios and oil ratios," Cashman said.

Since Cashman is the only chef making the spread, he mentioned that he may have to prepare a week's worth of Nutella at once, which will then be served until it runs out.

Most students were unaware of the return of a chocolate hazelnut spread, and those who were noticed that it is only available in limited amounts.

"I heard a while ago on YikYak that [the Nutella alternative] was back in the dining halls, but I haven't seen it in Proctor yet, nor been able to try it," said Jeff Adams-Lopez '28.5.

Detora provided some answers to students like Adams-Lopez and their Nutella questions. "How much we go through will determine the days in which we can offer [it]," he wrote.

Just as Dining Services hopes the new "Nutella" will offer students an equally satisfying and sustainable option, Middlebury recently announced the introduction of stainless steel takeout containers, which will be introduced in the fall 2025 semester.

Nicole Meyers '26.5, the Student Government Association (SGA) cabinet director for Health and wellness, explained that the containers come from the company USEFULL, which sells reusable to-go containers to several other colleges. The containers will function identically to the current plastic trays but without the old carabiner system.

To debut the new containers, Meyers and her team organized a "Future of Dining" event on Feb. 25 in Atwater Dining Hall. The evening consisted of a special eco-friendly vegetarian menu inspired by Dolci and a display of various takeout container prototypes which students could vote on.

Will the New-tella live up to its predecessor? Only time will tell.

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# THE ARCADIAN'S PASTA POPS UP AND OFF ON THURSDAY EVENINGS

**By MANDY BERGHELA**
*Senior Local Editor*

While The Arcadian, a modern Italian restaurant in Middlebury known for its handmade pasta, no longer operates full-time, it makes a special guest appearance — popping up, you might say, — for two evenings a month in Haymaker Bun Co.'s space on 7 Bakery Lane, where the two businesses formerly operated in tandem. Last Thursday, the approximate 115 lucky ticket holders shuffled into a space normally brimming with James Beard award-nominated buns and lattes to feast on some widely revered pasta and desserts under dimmed lights.

Hope Jerris '25.5 went for her second time to The Arcadian pasta pop up this past Thursday with a friend.

"It's definitely a pricey endeavor but I've really enjoyed going to the pasta pop-ups," Jerris said in an interview with The Campus. "It's a nice occasion to go to a nice dinner with friends off-campus and celebrate our friendship. I love the vibe there after dark, it's dark and cold outside but cozy and lively inside."

The menu varies with each event, but every pop-up features a curated selection of appetizers, handmade pasta dishes — both meat and vegetarian options — savory entrées, and a variety of desserts. The restaurant also serves different drinks and cocktails, both alcoholic and zero proof.

"Ordering is typical Haymaker-style counter service," Jerris said. "This time around we had focaccia with ricotta and thyme and roasted carrot arancini for appetizers. I thought the arancini were particularly delicious, crispy on the outside and creamy deliciousness on the inside. We got arancini at the pop-up last year and they were a hit then, too. For the main course, we ordered rigatoni ragù and shrimp scampi with white wine sauce and polenta. I was especially impressed by the shrimp dish, which was exactly what I had been craving."

Desserts last Thursday included a tiramisu and a blood orange tart as part of the full spread prepared by the dedicated family business that hosts the pop-up events.

Married couple Caroline and Matt Corrente '06.5 opened Haymaker Bun Co. and The Arcadian in 2018, creating a dynamic dual-concept space. In the mornings, Caroline ran Haymaker, serving breakfast and pastries, while in the evenings, Matt transformed the space into The Arcadian.

The name "Arcadian" comes from Matt's favorite painting, "The Course of Empire: The Arcadian or Pastoral State by Thomas Cole." The painting depicts a rural paradise, which the Correntes see as resonating with Vermont.

However, like many restaurants, The Arcadian faced challenges in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. By 2021, the couple made the difficult decision to close its doors as a full-time restaurant.

"We closed down The Arcadian portion of the restaurant after the pandemic — it was too crazy, with everything happening in the world and a staffing crisis," Caroline said in an interview with The Campus. "We have little kids, so my husband transitioned to a more traditional nine-to-five job."

While The Arcadian ceased daily operations, Haymaker Bun Co. remained a staple in Middlebury's food scene, continuing to serve breakfast and lunch offerings.

A year and a half ago, after Matt settled into his job as the director of Finance and Operation at the Addison County School District, he decided to revive The Arcadian in the evenings, and started curating menus for pasta pop ups.

"Matt's been a chef since graduating from Middlebury and later attending culinary school, so the pop-ups gave him a way to keep cooking and give the community a chance to enjoy great Italian food." Caroline said.

Courtesy Photo / Caroline Corrente
*The Arcadian returns for bimonthly pasta pop ups hosted in Haymaker Bun Co. space.*

The pop-ups are a standout success for Haymaker in the wake of recent financial difficulties. In an Instagram post on Feb. 25, Caroline asked the community to help her business out by purchasing gift cards.

"Like so many small businesses, Haymaker is currently experiencing turbulent economic conditions. We are navigating rising food costs (hello eggs!"), and bracing ourselves for the ripple effects of tariffs, all during the slowest time of the year," she wrote in the post.

If customers purchase a gift card — which can also be used for the pasta pop-ups — they will receive a small bonus on any purchase amount as a thank you.

The 100–130 tickets for the pop ups sell fast, nearly within 30 minutes of being posted on their website. The pop ups are announced through Haymaker's monthly newsletter, and customers can then make reservations online. If there are extra seats, they make sure to post about it on their instagram.

The focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients is a key part of what makes The Arcadian's pop-ups stand out. During the colder months, The Arcadian gets ingredients from Woods Market Garden in Brandon, Vt. and Black River Produce, a wholesale food distributor in North Springfield, Vt.

As long as the community continues to embrace them, the Arcadian pop-ups will remain a highly anticipated event in Middlebury's dining scene, one that brings people together in good company, and the warmth of a restaurant that can feel like home.

*Editor's Note: Managing Editor Madeleine Kaptein '25.5 contributed reporting to this article.*

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# Champlain Orchards revives Wassailing, a traditional blessing of the trees

**By LANGAN GARRETT**
*Staff Writer*

Courtesy Photo / Champlain Orchards

*Participants in the Wassail ceremony at Champlain Orchards hung donuts from the apple trees.*

On Sunday, Feb. 23, Champlain Orchards welcomed community members to take part in the Blessing of the Trees, also known as Wassailing. Wassailing is a traditional ceremony in which participants bless an orchard to protect its crop, ward off evil spirits and promote growth. Although the practice originates in Southern England, it is celebrated in cider apple orchards globally.

This past weekend, Champlain Orchards revived the generations-old tradition in a shared celebration of the season. At the ceremony, attendees enjoyed a variety of food options and the Orchard's traditional sweet mulled cider, a spin on the traditional Wassail drink. Guests explored the property, listened to live music by Bird Mountain String Band and gathered around a bonfire.

"It really is about bringing the community together to enjoy each other's company, to celebrate the harvest, and the season, and to enjoy some nice mulled cider and good food," said Susan Van Put, a project manager at Champlain Orchards. "And just to be together. Our event is kind of playing off of the traditional Wassail Event, but keeping within the same spirit."

A traditional Wassail ceremony features a Wassail King and Queen leading a procession from one apple orchard to another with villagers forming a circle around the largest apple tree to scare off evil spirits. In Champlain Orchard's unique interpretation, they hung donuts from the trees as offerings to the birds, which are thought to represent good spirits.

Van Put explained that Champlain Orchards had hosted a similar event in the past, but had not done so in recent years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She noted that previous celebrations were smaller, and this year's event aimed to attract a larger crowd.

"It has probably been a little bit of a simpler celebration, smaller gathering in the past, but this year we are hoping to bring out more people, so we have a live band, which we are really excited about… it is a great bluegrass band," Van Put said.

This year, Champlain Orchards went all out.

"We don't normally serve mulled cider here, but we will have that. We will have the Wassail version, which is based on our hard cider, and it has some mulling spices and some honey in it. We have a non-alcoholic version, which is based off of our Sweet Cider, which we sell year-round," she said prior to the event.

The actual blessing took place at 5 p.m. near the bonfire, where attendees sang a song per the Wassail tradition in a non-denominational manner. Champlain Orchard owner and manager Bill Suhr presided over the event, while his wife and business partner Andrea Scott performed the blessing and led everyone in song.

Van Put also shared that their Farm Market would be open during the event, offering attendees the opportunity to purchase items on sale such as hard cider, apples, sweet cider, maple syrup and apple butter.

Van Put emphasized that at the end of the day, this traditional celebration was about community.

"We want to bring the community together to bring some good energy to the orchard in preparation for the growing season, which starts very soon."

# TOWN HALL THEATER EXPANSION MARKS NEW CHAPTER FOR REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE

**By NOOR KHAN**
*Layout Editor*

Noor Khan / The Middlebury Campus

*The Town Hall Theater recently unveiled its new wing on Merchants Row*

The new wing of the Town Hall Theater (THT) in Middlebury is the result of an over $8 million fundraising project including a $1 million gift from Middlebury College, a $500,000 grant from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, a $60,000 Better Places grant and several additional smaller grants.

"We're growing from 'just' the community theater and arts center to something regional," said Lisa Mitchell, executive and artistic director of the THT.

With the growth, the theater is also considering changing its name to reflect its variety of offerings, which range from traditional professional productions by their resident companies, to speakeasy-style House of Jazz events, to an annual comedy series. The theater also hopes to further convey its expanding role in the regional arts community, according to Mitchell.

The building's 9,000-square-foot expansion will allow the theater to expand both their programming and teaching offerings.

For Lindsay Pontius, director of the Center for Learning and Engagement (CLE), which partners with the Town Hall Theater, the expansion marks a turning point. Over the past decade at THT, she has worked out of a small rehearsal space in what is now the old wing of the building. The previous lack of space limited the center to hosting only 12–15 camps and classes a year.

After the construction of the new wing, the theater will triple their CLE offerings, primarily expanding their selection of events for adults. They will offer classes for more in-depth programs, such as dance and sketch comedy, that run once a week for a span of nine weeks, along with experimental classes for new opportunities like culinary arts that will run for four weeks or less. Scholarships available for productions showing at THT apply to these classes, as well.

The brand-new scene shop — a dedicated space for set-building — in the basement of the new wing is essential to expanding the theater's capacity for hosting a greater quantity and variety of events. Additionally, the THT aims to establish the space as a hub for technical education with the intent of bringing in high school students for hands-on experience through the Hannaford Career Center.

"We were looking at the calendar and realized we were closed for 30% of the year because we had to use the stage for everything — building, rehearsing, performing. This opens up so many possibilities for us," Mitchell said, referring to the new wing's added spaces.

In the years since the Town Hall Theater acquired the neighboring Diner Lot in 2018, the expansion has been a collaborative process between the theater and the local community. The Town Hall Theater established its plans for the new wing by taking into account what the residents of Middlebury and Addison County hoped to gain from the expansion of the theater.

"We spent a good two years just going over plans, and we started fundraising by just going to some of our old friends and rolling out our blueprints on their kitchen table, and saying 'This is what we're thinking — what do you think?'" Mitchell said.

Town residents prioritized community gathering spaces and flexibility. In a Middlebury downtown master plan from 2020, one of the highlighted themes under the Arts & Culture section was a desire for "a place to hang out in the evenings that is not a bar" and that "music and fun events make people's differences disappear."

THT aims to do just that by including such spaces of their new wing, such as the Maloney Plaza, named after the first administrative assistant at the theater once it reopened in 2008. The paved plaza will feature gardens and an elliptical stage that can be moved for events like a block party and a dedicated space for food trucks. For more intimate events such as their free arts programming, the plaza is situated between the old and new wing.

"I can imagine with the plaza, the new wing… in terms of art, it's going to be a gem in the heart of downtown," said Walter Deverell, a long-time THT volunteer and Addison County resident. "Combine it with what's going on at the college, and it's quite the vibrant community we've got!"

Spaces such as the Anderson Center, an open flex space with overhead light fixtures spanning the ceiling and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Otter Creek, are an example of the multitude of flexible areas that the Town Hall Theater now offers. With a catering kitchen attached, THT envisions room for events such as graduation parties, reunion get-togethers, rehearsals, talks — the lot. The rest of the new wing contains several additional options for flexible use, such as the upstairs lounge area that will be used for events like an upcoming literary magazine launch party, allowing for a combined open-mic and mixer-style event.

THT doesn't plan to stop making their community space a community project. Their upcoming Center for Learning and Engagement's programming, which features a larger selection of dance and adult classes, is the product of conversations about the best function for their new spaces.

"We're going to have to do a lot of surveys and polls to see what's working, see what isn't as necessary, and filter [THT] into something that works really well for the community," Wilde said.

Cultural centers like THT contribute to the local economy by attracting visitors who may dine at nearby restaurants or visit local shops before or after events. Community members also benefit from the theater's programming fostering a stronger cultural scene.

"It's a win for the absolute joy of living in a small town that can make you happy," Deverell said. "It's a real upper — people coming in are in a good mood, they're happy to be there, and I truly enjoy feeding off of all that."

Coming up next on the Town Hall Theater's agenda is the National Public Radio's [presentation of The Moth on Tuesday, March 11 at 7 p.m. and the Champlain Philharmonic Orchestra with Diane Fanning on Saturday, March 29 at 7:30 p.m.

# WHICH SPEAKERS DESERVE TO BE PLATFORMED BY MIDDLEBURY?

## Editorial

*The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.*

On Feb. 20, the Alexander Hamilton Forum invited Brianna Wu, the executive director of Rebellion PAC, and Leor Sapir of the Manhattan Institute to speak on the "right approach on public policy and transgender medicine."

While Wu, a transgender woman herself, has voiced her support for gender-affirming policies, she has also made plenty of criticisms against the LGBTQ+ community, which she has repeatedly attacked for expanding its inclusivity. Sapir appears to be a specialist in gender identity policies, which may not sound like an issue. But in this role, he has supported President Donald Trump's recent executive orders rolling back protections for transgender people.

Do these two speakers truly represent the best representations of ideological diversity Middlebury can offer its students on a topic as complex as transgender politics in the United States? We believe that in order to foster true dialogue, a range of different opinions should be included in college-sponsored lectures, including the recent transgender healthcare forum.

As we learned on Thursday, inviting two speakers who disagree with each other on stage does not necessarily guarantee that the conversation will accurately reflect nuanced opinions on sensitive topics. People with extreme views will always be vocal, and we do not dispute that Wu and Sapir have a right to their opinions. Nor do we expect the college to always invite people the student body already agrees with, but their speech on campus should not come at the expense of facts and expertise.

Inviting a broader range of people with medical training and relevant knowledge of modern transgender issues — people who could meaningfully confirm or push back on the two speakers' political commentary — may have presented a more impactful conversation for students taking two hours out of their busy day to attend a political science lecture.

The largely non-disruptive response by the counter-panel, which focused on elevating its own speakers and staging a joyful demonstration, was a meaningful act of protest at a college with a troubled history of public demonstrations against controversial speakers. The dance party held outside of McCullough Student Center exemplified the freedom of our community members to celebrate identity and free expression without hampering Wu and Sapir's speech, providing concerned students, faculty and locals who may feel unseen by the ideas of the sponsored speakers with an outlet.

The legacy of the Charles Murray incident from 2017 and its still-present effects on student culture at Middlebury were the looming context for the recent controversy over the Hamilton Forum. Questions about the correct form of protest for controversial speakers — especially in the context of a newly-inaugurated Trump presidency — sparked contentious discourse over the college's sponsorship of the talk and what the correct student response should be. The experience from past controversies clearly informed the debate over these two panels; the Murray incident has continued to be a touchstone among the college community for student activism, free speech and the pot-stirring Poli Sci department.

We were glad the two events remained separate and distinct on campus to avoid direct confrontation, as the legacy of past student protests still shapes the level of anxiety felt by students, staff and faculty over these controversial lectures. We hope the community can continue to grapple with its response to challenging speakers and platforming people they disagree with in a respectful, non-aggressive manner as happened last week.

One unique aspect of Thursday's events was the simultaneous nature of these two talks, which had odd effects on student social culture and peer pressure. The development of the countertalk made some people feel uncomfortable with the idea of attending the Hamilton Forum event out of fear of being seen as choosing sides between transgender students and allies or the Hamilton Forum. These talks should always prioritize free engagement with ideas if students are interested in learning about them, and it is regrettable that some students felt their attendance became a political act. Still, social pressure aside, we were heartened to see many other students engaging with difficult conversations on a sensitive topic and showing up to attend the talk nonetheless.

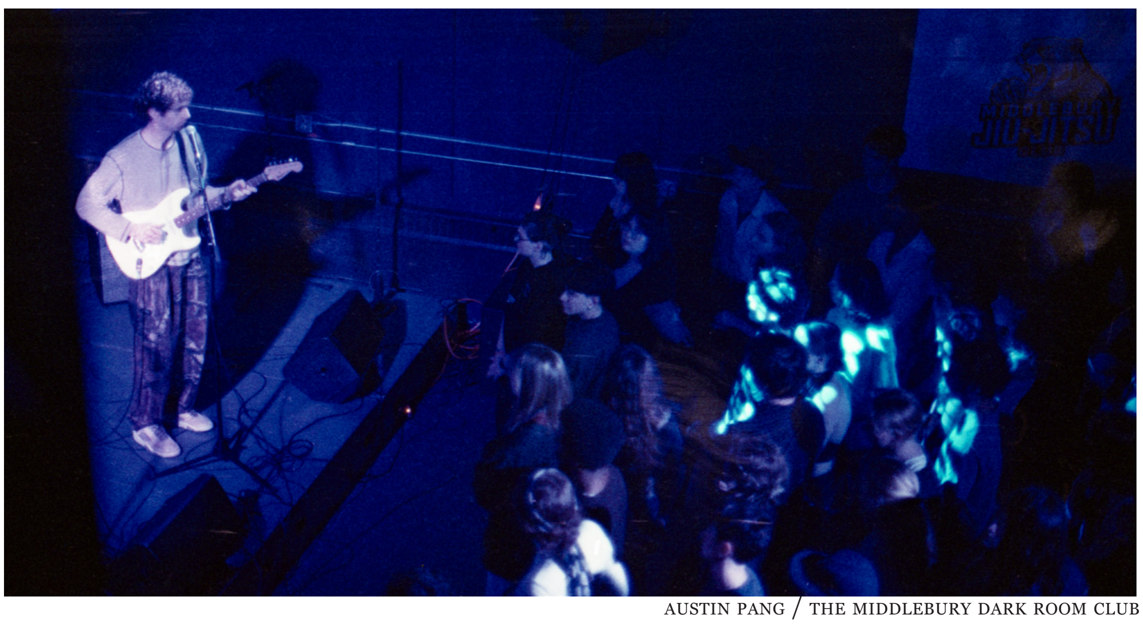
Similarly, we are grateful to the faculty members teaching our courses who take time out of the scheduled syllabus to discuss events like this happening on our campus. Addressing these topics productively dissolves the divide between planned coursework and what often occupies our minds when we should be focusing on our readings — the culture in which we are embedded on a daily basis, and a key component of our education.

The panels the college hosts on campus should be considered a part of the comprehensive liberal arts at Middlebury, and we believe that controversy just for the sake of provocation is not conducive to the college's educational mission. Events meant to embellish our learning beyond the classroom should add to our experience by teaching us to think critically in new ways, not to invite more chaos and protest that overshadows authentic learning and conversation. We are by no means against the principle of free speech, but to let it flow without sufficient consideration of the college's implications is not enough to facilitate productive conversation.

# *MIDDLEBURY'S LIVE MUSIC SCENE HAS AN INSTITUTIONAL BOTTLENECK*

## Op-Ed

**Curran Amster** *is an Opinions Editor and a member of the class of 2026.*



AUSTIN PANG / THE MIDDLEBURY DARK ROOM CLUB

*The Battle of the Bands competition last weekend showcased the importance of live music at Middlebury.*

Middlebury College has long promoted its vibrant music culture, advertising Wednesday Open Mic Night (WOMP), the Nocturne Arts Festival and even its rock-star alums such as the band members of Dispatch. Despite all that, Middlebury's institutional structure makes it unnecessarily difficult for musicians to access equipment, practice spaces or venues. If musicians can't access these resources, live music ceases and with it a unique opportunity for Middlebury to overcome its social divisions through open, on-campus live music events.

Currently, the college does not support or cultivate the most essential ingredient for a vibrant music culture: access to the resources that allow students to host informal live music events without facing institutional barriers.

Middlebury must reconsider its approach to live music and student-led events. First, the college should streamline access to music resources by improving transparency on how to access college-owned musical equipment and expanding the availability of practice spaces and that equipment. Second, the administration should designate additional on-campus spaces for live performances equipped to handle them without fear of noise complaints, which I've seen often preemptively shut-down both registered and unregistered events.

While the post-pandemic "music explosion" sparked a renewed enthusiasm for live music performance at Middlebury, our one weekly open mic night does not address the demand for more casual, music-centered social gatherings. WOMP attracts a musician-heavy audience already predisposed to seeking live music. For a campus as academically rigorous as Middlebury, a Wednesday evening that might conflict with academic and extracurricular events cannot be the cornerstone of its music scene. Instead, the college must address broader institutional barriers that stifle the creation of a dynamic, inclusive and student-led social culture independent from any one club, sports team or organization.

The root of the problem lies in access. Musical equipment is expensive, and most students depend on institutional resources to practice and perform, which is no small feat. Middlebury Music United (MMU) — the campus club responsible for managing the Freeman International Center (FIC) upstairs practice room and basement studio, access codes and equipment with Middlebury facilities — lacks a functional online presence. It often relies on periodically scheduled meetings via GroupMe, limiting access for students with busy schedules or competing commitments.

The college is trying to limit access to spaces such as the FIC by ensuring students know how to keep equipment damage-free when entering a space filled with fragile, expensive equipment. However, students should not be afraid to lose access to drum kits and XLR cables that may have already been damaged before we even stepped on campus. Perhaps the best example of this looming threat by the school system lives through the message written above the drum kit in the Mahaney Arts Center music practice room that announces: "If anyone breaks this, we will not replace it." While there should be consequences for intentional and irresponsible mismanagement of equipment, something as trivial as one student accidentally breaking a snare drum should not mean the rest of the student body also loses access to the drum kit.

Another issue is that coordinating with Facilities Services to secure equipment for live performances often prompts objections from Events Management, who are often wary of unsanctioned events. Many students abandon their idea for an informal, spontaneous event entirely rather than deal with these bureaucratic complications. Students are hesitant to organize events outside institutional norms due to the potential for public safety interventions, noise complaints, and when hosting off-campus events, the possible ensuing fines that come with noise complaints.

"I feel super lucky that I have had the opportunity to play live shows at Middlebury and each one has been an absolute blast. But, I do wish that the process to rent out equipment and practice rooms was more streamlined and equitable for all who want access," Levi Goldberg '26.5 wrote in a message to The Campus, when asked about his experience playing live shows at Middlebury.

Another significant barrier is the scarcity of suitable spaces for live music. The town of Middlebury's off-campus noise ordinance, which begins at 11 p.m. on weekends, discourages outdoor performances. To prevent disturbances to the residents of Middlebury, students should be able to host on campus, however, only roughly seven indoor venues can technically host a band without generating noise complaints, and only the FIC Bunker and the Gamut Room are readily equipped for the typical rock-band with equipment such as a PA, amplifiers, microphones, cords and mixing boards. These limited options exacerbate logistical challenges, forcing students to compete for space and time slots while contending with public safety's strict enforcement of noise policies.

There is a glimmering bright spot for the future of Middlebury's music scene. WRMC hosted a Student Battle of the Bands this past Saturday night in the FIC Bunker. The event last Saturday showed that Middlebury not only has a musically talented student body, but also has the capability to host inclusive and interesting events with the help of input from student organizations.

By empowering students to organize and perform without undue restrictions and easy-access to equipment and readily equipped venues, the college can transform its music culture into a genuinely inclusive and dynamic part of campus life: one where bands can play not just for themselves but for the enjoyment of the entire community. If Middlebury wants to attract and maintain an artistic and well-rounded student body, we need to provide an outlet for people to socialize through music. There is no better way to achieve the culture Middlebury claims to strive for than through live performances.

The Middlebury Campus

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**The Middlebury Campus**

# President Baucom, save Battell Hall from demolition

## Op-Ed

**David Gross** *is a member of the class of 2025.*

*"Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings."*
— Jane Jacobs

COURTESY PHOTO / MIDDLEBURY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

*Battell Hall is set to be torn down this year after housing Middlebury's first year students for over 70 years.*

For 75 years, Battell Hall has served as the first home for freshmen on campus. To many, the transformation of Battell's adorned ivy into glowing embers is the cherished harbinger of fall's arrival. It's no surprise that Battell graced the cover of the ubiquitous Princeton Review's "The Best 388 Colleges" college guide in 2023, which stands as a testament to Middlebury's timeless beauty. Living in Battell was a rite of passage. It was cramped. It was worn down. But we wore the badge of Battell with pride. Struggle breeds resilience, and resilience breeds community. That is the legacy of Battell Hall. It is no mere building; Battell has come to be an institution unto itself. Now that institution is under threat.

On Dec. 13, 2024, the Board of Trustees announced plans to demolish Battell Hall to make way for a new 35,000-square-foot art museum. The administration argues that the new museum, aligned with former President Laurie Patton's vision of an Arts Agora, will provide a central hub that fosters democracy, inclusivity and political engagement through art. I'm all for the arts, but let's stop hiding behind lofty ideals and have an honest conversation about what we're really trying to achieve.

The motivation behind this new museum is the need to display more of Middlebury's 7,000 strong art collection. On campus, we already have the Mahaney Arts Center (MAC) and the newly renovated Johnson Memorial Building, both of which are used for art exhibitions. Middlebury's museum is already one of only three percent of museums in the nation accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, placing it alongside giants like Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. And yet, apparently, that's not enough. Middlebury already has a plethora of performance venues: Wright Memorial Building, Dana Auditorium, the MAC, and Wilson Hall are all spaces that can and have been used for performances. If the issue is art storage, then we should build more storage on the outskirts of campus or expand or renovate the MAC to accommodate additional artwork.

A museum is supposed to be about preserving culture and history. Battell Hall is more than just marble and ivy; it is part of the beating heart that is Middlebury's history. Its halls have witnessed friendships forged that last a lifetime. It has welcomed returning alumni with memories of an innocent time that feels not so long ago. As a tour guide, I'll never forget speaking to an elderly alumnus, leaning on their cane, who smiled while looking fondly back on their time at Middlebury and said, "Yes, I lived in Battell." When alumni return to this campus, what draws them back? It's not the sleek, modern architecture or state-of-the-art facilities. It's standing before the same Battell Hall they once called home. It's the connection to something timeless, something hallowed. To sever that connection is to sever a piece of what makes Middlebury, Middlebury.

Let's say the new art museum is worth it in its own right. If we really cared about the arts, why would we tear down, arguably, the most beautiful building on campus in the name of creating an Arts Agora? This is not about resisting change just for the sake of nostalgia. This is about understanding that art and culture doesn't need to be housed in a pristine brand new museum. Art should be lived, preserved and connected to the people who make it matter. Battell Hall itself is a museum, a living artifact. To demolish it in favor of a new building is to betray the artistic ideals the administration claims to champion. If we're serious about the arts, let's start by recognizing the art intrinsic to Battell Hall.

The practical implications are just as concerning. Alumni outreach and fundraising depend on emotional connections to the campus. Battell Hall has been home to nearly 40% of each freshman class for decades. Imagine alienating over 20,000 former students who once lived in Battell. Imagine the message it sends to future generations: that what they build here can be so easily destroyed.

The college is nearing completion of a new first year hall. This dorm is expected to alleviate the housing crunch that has seen students relegated to off-campus accommodations like Bread Loaf in 2021 and the Inn on the Green in 2023. Some students were even offered $10,000 to take a voluntary leave of absence for the 2023 fall semester and J-Term. With this new dorm in place, the argument goes, there is no need for Battell. Yet, Battell's halls could still be renovated, its rooms reconfigured into singles to provide greater flexibility for students. It could even be used as storage or display space for our current art collection. The administration is planning on renovating the first year building Stewart Hall, so why not Battell? Battell's outdated interior should not be maintained, but to demolish it altogether would be an irrevocable loss. Funds should be directed towards renovation and preservation, ensuring it remains a cornerstone of Middlebury's legacy.

There are other places on campus to expand the arts. There are other ways to invest in creativity. There is only one Battell Hall.

This is about more than a building. This is about true dedication to art and history. The decision to demolish Battell Hall is not just an aesthetic choice; it's a declaration of what we value and where Middlebury's priorities lie. I urge the board to reconsider, to engage with the community and to honor our legacy. Let's not make the mistake of trading history, beauty and meaning for something that may be new but will lack the soul Battell brings to this campus.

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# Governor Phil Scott wants to kill the Global Warming Solutions Act

## Op-Ed

**Rick Walker** *is a member of the class of 2027.5.*

AUSTIN PANG / THE MIDDLEBURY DARK ROOM CLUB

*The dome of the Vermont State House, located in Montpelier.*

Vermont Governor Phil Scott has a track record of opposing progressive climate policies brought forth by the Democrats in the state legislature. Now that the Democrats have lost a veto-proof supermajority, Gov. Scott is finally showing us his true colors on climate.

And it is not pretty.

Since 2024, Gov. Scott has made repeated calls to move back climate targets set in the Global Warming Solutions Act. As of Feb. 20, we are finally able to see the governor's own proposal on climate actions. Touted as "an act relating to affordable climate initiatives," Bill H.289 was introduced by five Republicans in the Vermont State House on Thursday. It proposes sweeping changes that eliminate the greenhouse gas emission reduction requirements and opens up the possibility of nuclear power generation in the state. Gov. Scott also proposes to switch the method Vermont uses to calculate emissions from the gross network to a net accounting system. Finally, he wants to eliminate the authority of the Vermont Climate Council, the body that is responsible for keeping Vermont on track to meet the emission requirements outlined in the Global Warming Solutions Act.

In 2017, Gov. Scott criticized President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord. Now, he is calling for the departure from the very same goals he vowed to support, the goals he committed to when he became the governor, the commitment that won his Governorship.

At a time when the federal government is rolling back on climate, we need leadership from the governor to navigate through this crisis. The governor is doing the opposite.

### Global Warming Solutions Act

The Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), passed by the state legislature in 2020, created legally binding emission reduction requirements for Vermont: 26% by 2025, 40% by 2030, and 80% by 2050. It also created a specific roadmap to identify and develop policies and programs to reach these requirements.

The act passed in the legislature after an overwhelming majority voted to override Gov. Scott's veto, allowing Vermont to join dozens of other states that have specific emission reduction requirements.

The Governor's Plan

Bill H.289 is dubbed the governor's climate omnibus bill. But it is much more a "kill the climate" bill than a genuine solution to our climate crisis. Touted to deliver "affordable climate initiatives," the governor claims that the bill is aimed to address the affordability issue with Vermont climate actions. However, the bill's main purpose would be to remove the pathway for citizens to sue the state for failure to meet the climate requirements, a notable feature of the GWSA. The state is already facing its first lawsuit under the GWSA, filed by the Conservation Law Foundation for failing to meet its 2025 emission requirement.

In addition, Bill H.289 will switch the way Vermont calculates emissions from calculating the total human-caused emissions produced in the state to an accounting system that takes into account the amount of carbon offset by existing forests, which make up 71% of Vermont's landscape. Under this scheme, Vermont would become "net zero" on carbon emissions by 2035.

The bill also rebrands the current renewable energy standard to a clean energy standard, allowing the possibility of nuclear energy to be incorporated into the state's energy plan. Furthermore, it redirects funds from Efficiency Vermont, an organization that helps Vermonters to become more energy efficient, to strictly weatherization efforts, effectively reducing the total spending on climate resiliency.

### Vermont Climate Council

The biggest changes in Gov. Scott's plan, however, have to do with the Vermont Climate Council. The Vermont Climate Council was created under the GWSA to create a Climate Action Plan that maps out specific policy measures Vermont must adopt in order to meet the reduction requirements

The bill proposes to make the Vermont Climate Council's power advisory, eliminating any authority given to the Council. In a complete role reversal, it also gives the Agency of Natural Resources power over the Council, the very same government arm that the Council was responsible for holding accountable.

Under Scott's proposal, the governor would likewise gain more power in appointing members to the council, completely deleting the mechanism of tracking the state's current emission through the Council, and suspending all of its duties, except to draft a recommendation plan to the Agency of Natural Resources.

The Council would also lose its mandate to accurately measure the State's progress toward the emission requirements, climate resiliency, and effectiveness of its environmental policies. Shifting the State from a science-driven policy framework to one that is more "don't ask don't tell" on climate.

The Council will also suspend its review of section 248, the key barrier to renewable energy development, amongst its other responsibilities.

This is a time when we need leadership, as the governor displayed during Covid-19. Instead, the governor has apparently decided to sell out the state to Trump and Elon Musk. In a February fourth press release, the governor states: "But we should be fair and take time to understand what problem the President intends to solve, the results he expects to get, and the risks he's willing to take, before we cast judgement... While the President's tariffs would undoubtedly be very disruptive, and the risk of higher prices has been well reported, I have directed my team to weigh the outcomes fairly and objectively."

While our federal government is in the midst of its biggest crisis since the civil war, our governor seems to be more concerned about "weighing the outcomes fairly and objectively" instead of responding aggressively to the impact caused by the Trump administration, from cancelled grants that support research and Vermont nonprofits, to fired employees who previously worked in federal jobs and NGOs. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that Trump's action will have a long-lasting, devastating impact on the State. We elected the governor to protect us, and we need him to do it now.

Our way of life, our economy, our livelihoods, land, houses, roads, people — everything is on the line due to the warming climate. Here are two paths we can take: do nothing and keep letting our homes get destroyed, our neighbors swept away in flood water, and our mountains unleash mudslides and floods year after year.or we can step up and at least try to give us, not just our children, us, a better future, in the places we love. In 2026, when Scott is up for re-election, think about the two paths we can take in our state's future.

# EXIT MUSIC (FOR A CONCERT): RADIOHEAD COVER BAND FITTER HAPPIER AT HIGHER GROUND

**By GUS MORRILL**
*Arts & Culture Editor*

I am running late, but the venue stands like a glowing oasis amidst the mid-winter darkness and sludge of South Burlington. It is Feb. 7, and Radiohead cover band Fitter Happier has just taken the stage at Higher Ground. I find my way in, carrying perhaps not the highest expectations, but excitement nonetheless to hear an homage to one of the most influential art rock bands of the past few decades. As the crunchy drums and falsetto vocals of "15 Step" fill the room, it is immediately evident my expectations are misguided.

The self-proclaimed "premier Radiohead cover band of northern New England" consists of singer Jeff Beam and frequent collaborators Scott Nebel (guitar), Nick Place (keys/percussion), Sam Peisner (bass), Rob Cimitile (guitar/percussion) and Elliot Heeschen (drums). The ensemble wears, for the most part, flannels, jeans and tees — Beam and his neon pink pants are a glaring exception.

"We're all fans of Radiohead, and we enjoy the challenge of trying to perform these songs as accurately as possible," Beam explained when asked about Fitter Happier's inception. This performance marks one of the group's first outings under this self-declared creed, and it is clear there is a market as the venue becomes dense with fans young and old.

"Knives Out" is one of the first tracks performed, and through Beam's thick beard pours Thom Yorke's brutal sincerity, enveloped by Nebel and Cimitile's busy guitar parts."There, There" is similarly tight, carrying all the angst and despair characteristic of the UK band. Rob Cimitile now clutches two drumsticks in his left hand, frantically playing rhythm both on a drum in front of him and on the guitar still slung over his shoulder.

The original Oxfordshire-based band is hard to pin down. Across their 40 years of albums, singles, EP's, features and live albums, the group traversed genres, ranging from the Britpop and rock of "The Bends" to the electronic stylings of "Kid A." Their singularity and uncompromising weirdness drew both widespread admiration and a fair share of ire: the band was too pretentious, the members too antisocial, the music inaccessible and pompous. Yet regardless of individual opinions, the band seemed to exist on a plane of its own, delivering transcendent sets such as the 2008 "In Rainbows — From the Basement" live album, the 2006 Bonnaroo performance, and the 2000 "Live From a Tent in Dublin."

The Ireland performance was notable for the band's rendition of their song "The National Anthem," with its alien atmosphere and distorted vocals. Fitter Happier's interpretation of the song sees the mercurial Cimitile kneeling in front of an array of pedals, strumming notes, now turning a knob, now holding his strings in a palm mute, intricately creating his own otherworldly sonic landscape. Before this song, Cimitile brandished a violin bow to play his electric guitar, and later on he plays a small xylophone for the lullaby-like tones of "No Surprises," bent on tapping into the strangeness Radiohead personifies.

Beam's frontman intensity is palpable, both in the kinetic, more abrasive songs and in the softer ones such as "Exit Music (For a Film)." As the night goes on, he begins to down honey straight from the bottle, pushing through exhausted vocal chords to finish the set strong. Heeschen's performance on the drums is also of note, consistently finding himself deeper in the pocket than lost keys, and Peisner's bass is similarly on point.

The crowd spans several age groups, yet everyone sways and nod their heads, mesmerized. Before the night can come to a close, the familiar chords of "Karma Police" filter throughout Higher Ground, and the excited audience begin to sing the lyrics at the top of their lungs. A community is formed, gathered out of the appreciation of a legacy and leaving with visions of beautiful "Fake Plastic Trees" and Jeff Beam's neon pink pants.

GUS MORRILL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

*Fitter Happier rocked out on stage with their reimagined covers of Radiohead songs.*

# *SPARKING CONVERSATION: "WHO BY FIRE" OPENS SPRING SEASON OF THE HIRSCHFIELD INTERNATIONAL FILM SERIES*

**By SHELLY ZHOU & WENDY WANG**
*Contributing Writer & Online Editor*

The winner of the 74th Berlin International Film Festival Grand Prize, the Canadian-French drama "Who By Fire," opened the spring season of the Hirschfield International Film Series to a packed Dana Auditorium on Feb. 20. Following the screening, the film's writer and director Philippe Lesage led a Q&A in which he spoke more about his creative process.

The film takes place deep in the Canadian wilderness, where a weekend getaway trip becomes rife with unforeseen tension. Screenwriter Albert Ahmarani (Paul Ahmarani) accepts the invitation of esteemed director and old friend Blake Cadieux (Arieh Worthalter) for a brief stay at his woodland cottage. Albert brings his children, Aliocha (Aurélia Arandi-Longpré) and Max (Antoine Marchand-Gagnon), as well as Jeff (Noah Parker), Max's friend and aspiring filmmaker.

The happy reunion is soon soured when past antagonism resurfaces at the dinner table as Albert and Blake revisit the creative differences that led to the abrupt end of their collaboration. Meanwhile, Max plots to connect with his crush Aliocha and learn the ropes of filmmaking from his idol Blake, but his hopes are soon to be disrupted.

Vibrant and exhilarating, the film relies on the breathtaking wilderness to accentuate the tension between the characters as their guise of civility drops away to reveal something much more raw and sinister. The confines of the cottage mean that secrets cannot stay hidden for long, and the cheer that permeates one scene often gives way to open conflict the next. One particularly striking scene features a dance number, where characters made a conga line to the tune from the B52's "Rock Lobster." The stunning backdrop of rural Quebec puts in relief a machismo that borders on the primal. Whether they are hunting, fishing or canoeing, there is a not-so-subtle note of danger — not from nature, but from one another — culminating into a brilliant scene of suspenseful confrontation.

"Who by Fire" is an unconventional coming-of-age film where appearances are revealed to be deceptive and the glamor of adulthood nothing more than a facade. In his Q&A, Lesage shared that these themes are hinted at towards the beginning when Aliocha discovers the rock mill inside the forest, the hidden destruction of natural beauty is an allusion to the unseen lapses of adult role models.

The first half of the film unfolds from Jeff's perspective, focusing on his shame and disappointment in the status quo which drives him to desire change. One such instance features him fleeing the cottage to seek solitude in the woods. His bravery is short-lived when darkness takes over and the looming reality of becoming lost sets in. While Jeff manages to find a small log cabin to spend the night, his venture is ultimately brought to an underwhelming end when it is revealed that Blake's cabin was not so far away after all.

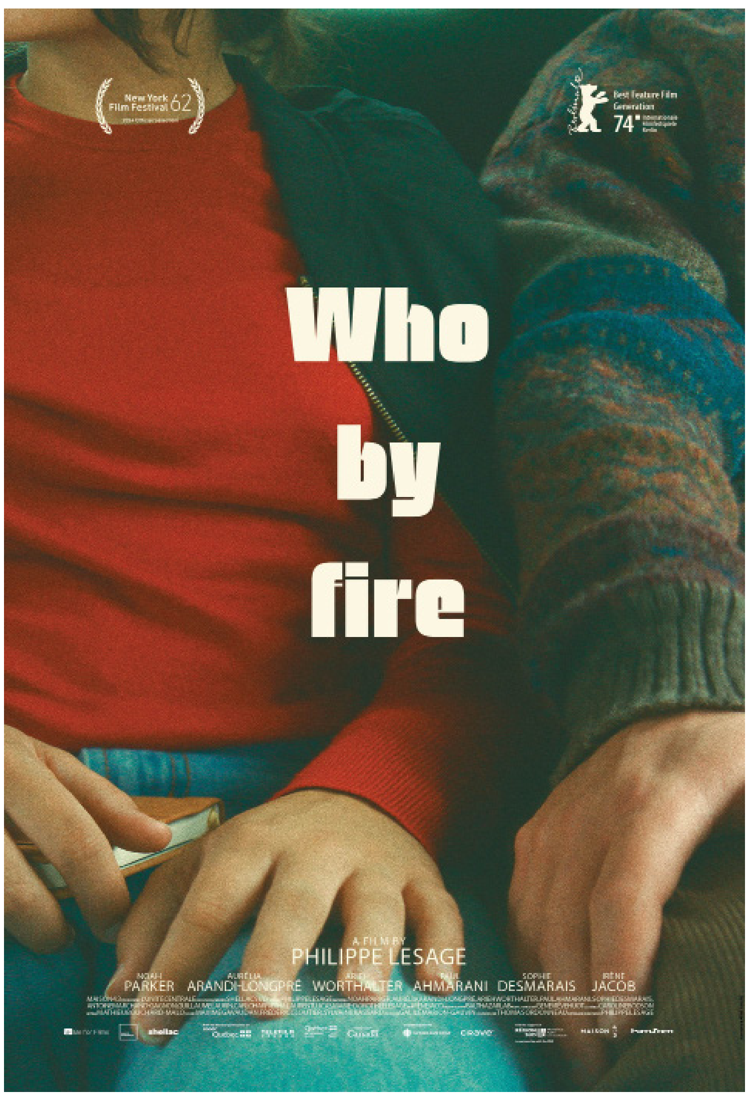
Aliocha's viewpoint takes over towards the end of the film, and contrary to Jeff, she stands firm by her beliefs. Aliocha is entirely dedicated to creating art by focusing on her novel throughout the trip, whereas Jeff appears to have abandoned his filmmaking dreams after becoming disillusioned by Blake's "success."

Adults in the film are often the cause of disappointment. While Blake is introduced as an accomplished director, his personality proves to be much less affable, and his snide remarks towards Albert are often the cause of their conflict. Two scenes help to illustrate Blake's toxic nature . Once over dinner, he shares his experience while hunting, dismissing the slaughter of innocent wildlife with an authoritative indifference. A similar toxicity is revealed when he takes advantage of Aliocha, inappropriately photographing her and persisting her even after she explicitly refuses. Aliocha transitions from admiring him to despising him as she realizes his true intentions. The slow development of his toxicity directly causes the collapse of his image for the teens in the film, disillusioning them toward any previous ideals about him or filmmaking.

Similarly, Jeff is initially a devoted fan of Blake's work, and even is given a screenplay from him. As he processes Aliocha's "transgression" and the breakdown of Blake as the adult figure he always looked up to, he enters a period of silence, observing the commotion around him without voicing any of his thoughts. During this period of silence, Jeff sees the true absurdity of the adults as they revert back to a more primitive form and continue interacting with nature, eventually merging with it.

As the adults revert to this "state of nature" they start to lose reverence for their surroundings, embarking on an adventurous but ultimately deadly canoeing venture. The beauty, grandness and majestic quality of nature is shown as the crew paddles their way through the valley as the heights of green mountains tower over their existence, grounding them in this space. Failing to realize the foreboding danger, the crew, guided by the current, drifts right into the rapids. The wrath of nature plunges them into the water, capsizing their canoes. As they struggle to get safely to shore, nature is once again depicted as indifferent towards the joys and woes of human life.

"Who by Fire" is a thrilling piece of commentary that prompts audiences to reconsider their beliefs and ideals, just as the kids throughout the film do. Taking its name from the 1974 song by Leonard Cohen, the film offers a reinterpretation of the power dynamics detailed in the lyrics: "Who in mortal chains, who in power / And who shall I say is calling?"



COURTESY PHOTO / MIDDLEBURY FILM & MEDIA CULTURE

*"Who by Fire" opened the spring semester of the Hirschfield International Film Series in Dana Auditorium.*

HIRSCHFIELD

# STRUNG TOGETHER THROUGH THE SEASONS: UNITED FOR UKRAINE 2025

By **MADINAH ROSEN**
*Contributing Writer*

Arms linked, weights distributed, bodies encircled in a ring and performers moved harmoniously to the rhythm of the spirited musical symphony in Arkan, a traditional Ukrainian folk dance featured in the fourth annual United for Ukraine event.

Students and community members filled Robison Concert Hall on Feb. 22 to witness a diverse and united student body that stood in solidarity with a gripping crisis. The event was organized by the Ukrainian Student Group in collaboration with the Mahaney Arts Center and Middlebury department of music.

The overall theme of the performances was inspired by the four seasons and featured various cultural dance and musical displays, poetry recitations and a skillful theatrical skit. The event embodied an energized and vibrant appreciation for a rich cultural heritage. The student performers came from a wide range of backgrounds, establishing the significance of finding unity within struggle and that human lives and cultural traditions must be protected.

The students primarily responsible for the preparation and organization of the show were Sofiia Tretiak '27, Valeriia Dudiak '27.5 and Anastasiia Demchenko '28, who began planning the event in early October. One of Tretiak's responsibilities included choreographing three intricate Ukrainian folk dances to teach to the student participants, an experience she enjoyed.

"It was meaningful to share elements of Ukrainian culture with students from all over the world," Tretiak said in an interview with The Campus.

Demchenko opened the show with a welcome note addressing the current devastating conflict in Ukraine. As a Ukrainian student, her message was imbued with somber, personal emotions and an energized purpose. The speech invited the audience to immerse themselves in the rich vibrancy of Ukrainian culture and to educate themselves about the ongoing war.

Ernesto Gallego '27 and Mizero Inez Kevine Ineza '27 dynamically emceed the sequence of performances with an intentional plan to create a meaningful night.

"I wanted to become immersed in something greater than myself and to reserve space for a diverse student body coming together and working towards a meaningful purpose," Gallego said.

The first segment of the show was winter, where Maya Murtuza-Lanier '27.5 recited the poem "Vinchivka," followed by Ukrainian Carols, which were performed by Director of Choral Activities Jeff Buettner and the Middlebury College Choir.

Then spring came, featuring a theatrical performance called "Mavka," performed by Demchenko and Nathan Bernazzani '27, and followed by the uplifting Ukrainian traditional dance "Kalyna." The dance featured a twirling white-skirted sea of beautifully dressed dancers holding sprigs of the Kalyna plant, weaving and swaying elegantly around one another, creating a truly captivating performance.

Summer introduced the warm music solo "Hopak," masterfully performed by Sophie Liebman '27.5 and Murteza-Lanier. Then, Artemis Ge '28 recited the poem "Arkan," with the Arkan ring dance following shortly after. Its rhythmic synchronicity was palpable; students moved in unison, supporting each other through the intricate motions and subtly provoking the audience to recognize the clear dedication put into choreographing and performing such an intricate dance.

"I knew I would encounter people from diverse backgrounds and with like-minded moral values, and who care about global issues. It helped to find such a community within my first few days here," remarked Daria Dumbrava '28.5, an international student from Romania.

The last season, fall, opened with the poem "Holodomor," read by Rostyk Yarovyk '25, who has been participating since the program began in 2022. This was followed by a rendition of "Elegie. La Tristesse Op. 39," which was performed by Roskva Torhalsdottir '25 on the bassoon and Greg Marcinik '25.5 on piano.

The finale included a performance of the poem "Endurance" by Sofiia Tretiak '27 and a final dance titled "Hopak," which was choreographed by Tretiak and performed by students.

As the lights went down and the audience exited the concert hall, they were met with the opportunity to donate to the Ukrainian cause and purchase student-made gingerbread cookies. Tretiak noted that this was one of the highlights of the event's preparation, as they — along with several students in the CCE kitchen — prepared one hundred cookies using Dudiak's family recipe. The entire process took three weeks and definitely paid off, as every single cookie was sold that night.

Feb. 24, 2025 marked three years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, United for Ukraine acknowledged the tenacity of the Ukrainian people by emphasizing the impact of cultural appreciation and student solidarity within the Middlebury community.

The event called attention to the ongoing devastation in Ukraine, and urged the audience and wider community to remember that the heart of a society does not lie in the ability to conquer or reign over vast portions of land. Rather, United for Ukraine 2025 showed that it thrives in creating a community that engages with one another across a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives.

UNITED FOR UKRAINE

COURTESY PHOTO / BALFOUR STUDIOS

*Performers in United for Ukraine swayed to the music in the concert hall to call attention to the ongoing war and their cultural pride.*

Enjoy these two puzzles as a change of pace from our typical full-sized crosswords. "Envelope, Please" is a British style puzzle commonly known as a cryptic. If you are new to this format, check out go/cryptic or go.middlebury.edu/cryptic/ for a guide from the Wall Street Journal. Definitions are bracketed in the print version for beginners, but if you want a challenge the online version has the training wheels off. We are excited to try out a lot of new puzzles, and we want your feedback! Email campus@middlebury.edu or leave a comment online to tell us what you think or if you are interested in publishing puzzles of your own.

– Josh Harkins and Egan Turner, Puzzle Editors

## First Campus Mini!

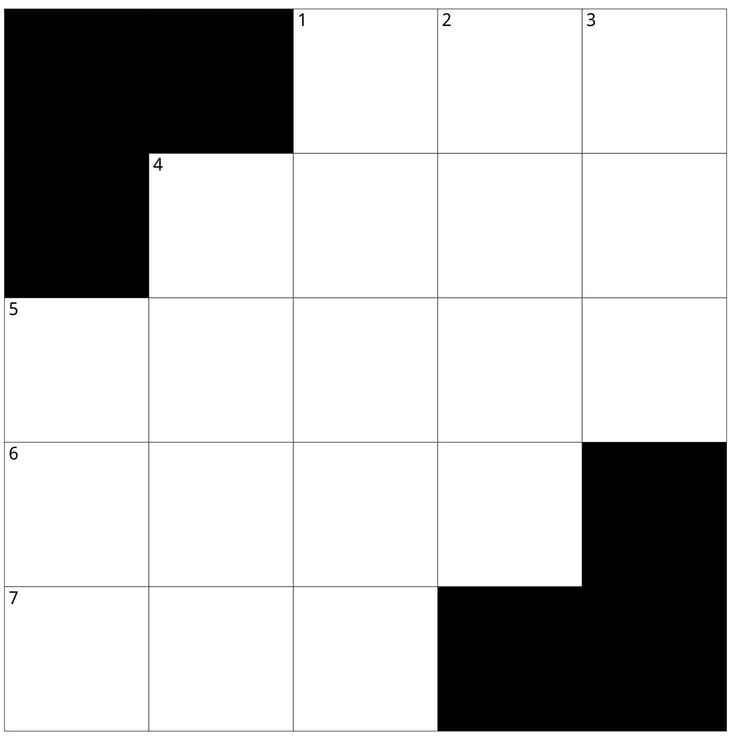
Aaron Cohen

**ACROSS**

1 Trident-shaped letter
4 Hawaiian dance
5 Trump, OJ, or Cosby
6 Formerly, formerly
7 Beats creator

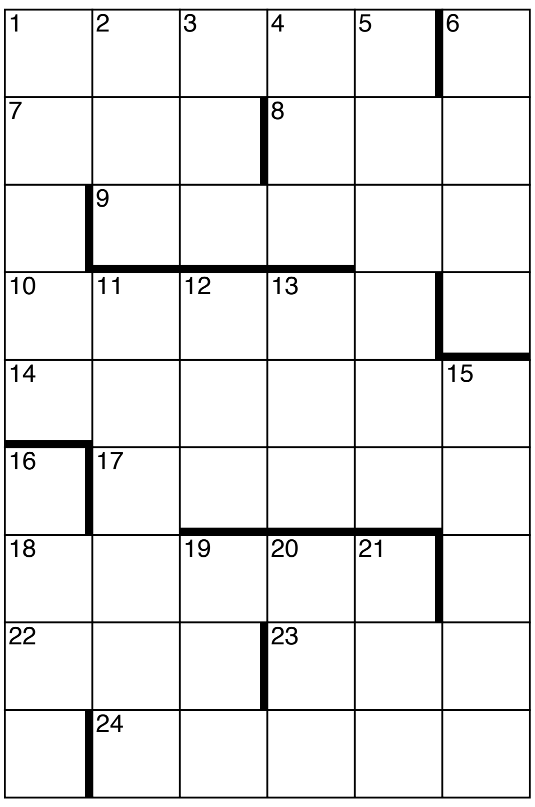
**DOWN**

1 Sign of life
2 Narrow opening
3 Laurie's successor
4 Mister in Munich
5 Nourished



## Envelope, please

By Egan Turner - Published on https://crosshare.org



**ACROSS**

1 ["Dune" actor] is a cooling unit (5)
7 Not one sounds like a [convent resident] (3)
8 Drink rich in calcium is without one [civil right's activist, for short] (3)
9 [Cold cut producer] in emergency room after fifth month (5)
10 Pull up with a [blue coat on campus] (5)
14 [Sunday's event] is what comes before 1-Across, 9-Across, 18-Across, and 24-Across (6)
17 [Archaic "you say"] is found on Ramsay Street (5)
18 [Dorian Gray creator] is ferocious, we hear (5)
22 [Earlier] leaders of Alabama, Georgia, and Ohio (3)
23 [Miscalculate] 21-Down, so it's said (3)
24 ["The Office" actor] attends the University of New England, which is stuck in New Zealand (5)

**DOWN**

1 Pion's aimless [imagination, briefly] (5)
2 [Total] of ghetto without 50 (3)
3 [Actress de Armas] is living in Canada (3)
4 [Famous Adams] hosts the finale of Banana Cream Day (3)
5 Shakespearean king goes into Computer Science, [becomes sunny] (6)
6 [Gumbo vegetable] sounds good to Egyptian sun god (4)
11 [Give a task] as an indicator (6)
12 Totaled car in the [electronics co.] (3)
13 Himalayan cattle gets turned around, becomes [a jeweler] (3)
15 [TV network] features backwards rats and the first Zambian (5)
16 [Trade] in Seattle's state in the S&P (4)
19 Loud without delta is [Yankee Gehrig] (3)
20 Bear cave is a [family home, to some] (3)
21 [Before, before] 23-Across, orally (3)

# *Men's squash honors seniors in their final match of the regular season*

By TING CUI
*Senior Sports Editor*

MIDDLEBURY

COURTESY PHOTO / MIDDLEBURY ATHLETICS

*The men's squash program honored its four senior members, pictured alongside their parents, in a pre-match ceremony.*

Last Friday, the Middlebury men's squash program bid farewell to its seniors in an emotional ceremony at the Bostwick Family Squash Center, marking the end of an era. The men's team, ranked 17th nationally, celebrated four departing seniors before playing MIT in the last game of their regular season: Captains Alexis Ballo '25 and Nathan Feinstein '25, alongside Julian Sandoval '25 and Will Lichstein '25. On Feb. 1, the 16th-ranked women's squash team honored captain Abby Holding '25 in their game against Amherst college.

The ceremonies, organized by teammates, featured heartfelt speeches and personalized posters celebrating each senior's contributions to the program. The event drew a packed house, with parents, professors, friends and supporters from across the Middlebury community in attendance.

"It was definitely really special," Ballo said. "It's emotional to see your four years summarized in a speech or poster, and have your whole team support you so publicly."

The four graduating seniors have each shaped the program in their own unique ways. Ballo, the team captain, excels at creating genuine connections, ensuring every player feels valued regardless of their ladder position. Fellow captain Feinstein serves as the team's "glue guy," in Ballo's words, transforming individual players into a cohesive unit. Lichstein elevates the team's work ethic through personal example, and Sandoval brings positive energy, maintaining team morale during intense training and high-pressure matches. Together, they've built a culture of camaraderie and excellence that will influence the program for years to come.

Despite the festive atmosphere, the men's team faced tough competition in their final home matches. They fell 7–2 to 19th-ranked MIT on Friday, in a contest that featured several hard-fought battles. Charlie Clifford '27 delivered an impressive comeback victory in the seventh position, rallying from a 12–10 first-game setback to secure three straight wins (11–8, 11–5, 11–8) against MIT's Collin Wen. Aditya Kothari '28 added the Panther's second point with a commanding 3–0 sweep (11–9, 11–4, 12–10) over Lars Barkman in the eighth position. The match concluded with the evening's most grueling battle at the fifth position, where Caleb Boateng '26 and MIT's Robert Albani traded games before Albani ultimately prevailed 11–9 in the decisive fifth game after an hour and 11 minutes on court, sealing the 7–2 final score.

For the graduating seniors, these matches represented more than just their final home appearances.

"This is probably the best squash that we'll ever play – we've been training for this our entire lives, pretty much, and this is kind of the capstone of everything we've been working for," Ballo said. "It's great to see the growth we've all seen on court. I've definitely seen levels of my game improve, just because of the incredible Mark Lewis."

Under the guidance of head coach Mark Lewis, the program has flourished, particularly through his ability to recruit talented players by prioritizing both athletic excellence and team chemistry.

"He's also just a great coach on the court," Ballo said. "He reads the game very well. He played professionally and has a great understanding of how each of us play, our strengths and weaknesses. When you're in the heat of a match, he's really good at calming you down and focusing you on what needs to be done in your next game."

Coach Lewis, alongside the seniors, has helped foster a distinctly collaborative environment across the men's and women's programs.

"Mark really focuses on the holistic class – guys and girls," Feinstein said. "We're really one team. The women's team and us will be at Nationals the same weekend, so we'll go to all their matches and they'll come to all of ours."

At the start of February, the men's program strengthened its coaching staff by welcoming back former team captain Teddy Best '22 as an assistant coach for both the men's and women's teams. Best, who served as captain during the current seniors' first year, has brought valuable perspective and experience mentoring younger players during his time as captain. Working alongside head coach Mark Lewis, Best has helped maintain the program's momentum heading into the national championship.

Both teams now turn their attention to the 2025 College Squash Association Divisional Team Championships this coming weekend at the Arlen Specter U.S Squash Center in Philadelphia. The Panthers are poised for excellence, with both teams aiming for their highest finishes in recent program history.

"It's a special group to be a part of," Feinstein said. "Everyone would tell you this is the best team they've been on in the Middlebury squash program."

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# SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH ALEX POWER '25, PRESIDENT OF MIDDLEBURY CLUB HOCKEY

By JACK McGUIRE
*Sports Editor*

In this edition of Seven Questions, Alex Power '25 told The Campus about his hockey career, the growth of the club team from just a few players skating around to a team that plays games against other schools and the team's goal this season.

**Jack McGuire:** What is your background with hockey?

**Alex Power:** I've been playing hockey ever since I was about four or five. I started playing in New York City, over in Central Park, and then when I got older, I upgraded to a travel team. Then, I played for my high school team. I now play club hockey for Middlebury. I'm the president.

**JM:** What has your experience with Middlebury Club Hockey been like?

**AP:** It's really a place where people who played in high school can still be able to play somewhat competitively. Obviously, hockey is a really difficult sport to play on the varsity level in college, given that most hockey players will take one or two gap years just to play hockey. So it's a place where people who don't necessarily want to play at the varsity level can still come out and skate and have some pretty competitive practices, and we have a generally very high level of play, so it's quite enjoyable.

**JM:** How is the team looking this year?

**AP:** We're deep right now. I thought we had a good fall, and then we had a couple people go abroad, but I'm surprised at the amount of talent we had this spring. So I think we have a pretty strong roster from top to bottom. We're not overly dependent on one or two people, but we've got talent all over the board.

**JM:** What has it been like leading the club as president?

**AP:** It's a treat. It was fun. Our last couple months have been a little bit more casual, given we have been IM playing hockey during J-Term, but we're ramping it up a little bit slowly, trying to finish out our season strong, and it's fun. I don't have to do all that much as club president. I put in the forms to schedule the ice, but otherwise, everyone's a good skater. We kind of come out and play some casual pickup hockey, so it's not too much of a burden on me and I still get to come out and enjoy everything.

N.E.S.C.A.C. WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONS 2018
N.E.S.C.A.C. WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONS 2022
N.E.S.C.A.C. ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONS 2010
N.E.S.C.A.C. ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONS 2007
N.E.S.C.A.C. ICE HOCKEY CHAMPIONS 2006
CLUB HOCKEY

COURTESY PHOTO / ALEX POWER

*Alex Power '25, bottom row and second from left, poses with the Middlebury Club Hockey team.*

**JM:** What are some of your all-time favorite memories with club hockey?

**AP:** Well, we had our first game last fall — that was pretty special. We hosted Skidmore sometime in the beginning of December. I believe we didn't win that one, but it was pretty exciting to actually be able to strap on full pads and play at a high level, you know, like we're used to doing in high school. That was probably the best moment we've had in my four years here. But we've really made a lot of progress with the club since I was a freshman. I remember when I was a freshman, we would come out and have maybe five or six skaters skating on very chopped up ice that was just left over from whatever varsity had just done. And we've really grown a lot to the point where we're getting some more competitive practices with a lot of people showing up.

**JM:** What are the team's goals moving forward?

**AP:** I would like it to become a well-established club, such that people who have grown up playing hockey will actively seek it out and come out consistently. So right now, we have a pretty strong team, I think, but there are still plenty of people around campus who are really good hockey players, but don't come out for one reason or another. So I think it would be pretty awesome to expand the club, to include those people, and make sure that people are coming out on a consistent basis.

**JM:** What's your favorite restaurant in town?

**AP:** It's gotta be Two Bros. You know, there are only so many. I do like the Korean fried chicken sandwich. I like the poutine. The burger is okay.

# *WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM FALLS SHORT TO COLBY IN INTENSE DOUBLE OVERTIME NESCAC QUARTERFINALS*

**By VICTOR KORTE**
*Contributing Writer*

COURTESY PHOTO / WILL COSTELLO

*Kale Tornwini '25 scored an impressive 29 points for Middlebury in the quarterfinals game against Colby.*

In the regular season, Middlebury women's basketball lost to Colby College by three points in overtime (75–72). Two weeks later, in Waterville, Maine, the Panthers must have felt deja-vu as they fell short by three points once again, this time in a double-overtime playoff show-down.

The game started slow for the Panthers, falling behind 7–0 to the Colby Mules. Despite this, senior Alexa Mustafaj '25 came out of the gates with intensity, driving to the rim for a lay-up, blocking the next possession, and executing a saucy step-back mid-range jumper to take an 8–7 lead. In the first quarter, the Panthers benefited from the fact that the Mules were (quite fittingly) slow to get back on defense by capitalizing on fast-break mismatch layups.

Mustafaj set the energy for the first quarter, fighting through two defenders in the last minute to extend Middlebury's lead to six. The second quarter action was a back-and-forth game of patty cake as the half ended 37–32 for the Panthers.

As the third quarter began, the Mules awakened and quickly took back the lead within four minutes of play. Augusta Dixon '25 unleashed her inner Ivica Zubac and dominated the boards, recording an astonishing career-high 25 rebounds. The quarter ended as Calie Messina '26 sank a thrilling buzzer-beater three from way downtown — waking up even the Colby student section.

Middlebury started the fourth quarter with a six-point lead that was cut to one within the first two minutes. Kale Tornwini '25 took off this quarter by banging three-of-five from beyond the arc and stacking an impressive 29 points off the bench. The lead was in constant flux, and the Middlebury watch party grew more and more electrified. It was a two-point game with 44 seconds left, when Mustafaj hit a free throw to extend the Panther's lead to three. However, the Mules weren't done fighting. Colby sank a clutch three-pointer to tie the score 81–81 and force the game into overtime.

Overtime started, and the lead was like a chameleon in a rainbow, changing almost every possession. The Mules and the Panthers were at each other's throats. As hope slipped away from Middlebury, Dixon dished a layup to tie the game at 90 with 1.5 seconds left. Colby got a good look at a mid-range shot for the win but sold it, sending the game into double overtime.

The second overtime period started strong for Middlebury with Mustafaj burying a deep three-pointer, then ordering a floater to give the Panthers a 3-point lead (95–92). The Mules responded quickly by going on a 5–0 run to tie the game at 97 with less than a minute left to play. During a minute that seemed to last an eternity with a flurry of timeouts and fouls, the Colby Mules emerged victorious at the end of a riveting double overtime game.

Standout performances included Mustafaj, who logged 34 points, Dixon, who grabbed a nasty 25 rebounds and Tornwini, who dropped an impressive 29 points off the bench.

This game marks the end of the Mustafaj era at Middlebury. She will graduate as the program's all-time leading scorer (2,180), and currently owns the school records for most field goals made (815) and most free throws made (397).

"I'm forever grateful I was able to get the opportunity to play at Middlebury and have teammates and the ability to create relationships that will last a lifetime," Mustafaj said.

"I'm glad that I was able to connect with such an amazing group of girls who, day-in and day-out, put in so much effort into this team. Everything I do out on the court was fueled by those 14 girls," Tornwini said.

Although eliminated from the NESCAC tournament, the Panthers await their NCAA Tournament fate, with the bracket announcement on Monday, March 3.

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# PANTHERS PLACE SIXTH AT MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING NESCAC CHAMPIONSHIP

**By WERONIKA WOZNY**
*Contributing Writer*

This past weekend, Middlebury hosted the NESCAC Men's Swimming & Diving Championship for the first time since 2019. Over four days, the Panthers competed in more than 20 events, setting five school records and achieving multiple NCAA 'B' cut swims, earning them sixth place overall with a total score of 919 points.

The meet started off strong on Thursday with Rodin McKenna '27, Pierce Bigelow '25, Matthew Hensel '25 and John Masiello '27 breaking the school record for the 800-yard freestyle relay. The quartet finished seventh with a combined time of 6:43:81, beating Middlebury's 15-year-old record (6:46:10) by nearly 2.5 seconds.

Friday brought yet another achievement, with Luke McNamara '26 breaking the 200 individual medley (IM) record, which has stood for 28 years. McNamara surpassed the 1997 mark of 1:51:20 in preliminaries, when he touched the wall with a time of 1:50:88. He then beat his own time in the championship finals later that day by over half a second, posting a school record of 1:50:31 and earning him a fourth-place finish.

Where McNamara dominated the day, Hensel earned himself the night's fastest event, claiming 14th place in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 21:13.

The Panthers further extended their presence at the NESCAC championship in the 50-yard breaststroke with Paul Shen '26 finishing 13th place with a time of 25:76 and James Thomas '27 in 16th, touching the wall at 26:22.

The Middlebury divers also delivered and boosted the team's standings in the one-meter event. Owen White '26 finished seventh with a score of 360.90 and Henry Wang '27 followed him in 11th with a score of 279.55.

Wang reflected on the event as a whole from his perspective as a diver.

"Even though with just two members, we were not as competitive this year in terms of numbers and experience. We still felt very excited to represent Middlebury."

Friday wrapped up with the Panthers coming close to breaking yet another school record during the 400-yard medley. Jack Undercofler '25, Shen, Andrew Dou '26, and Masiello finished seventh with a time of 3:20:17, falling short of the school record by a mere 0.02 seconds.

Saturday was another successful day for the Middlebury swimmers. During the kick-off event of the evening session, Undercofler, Shen, Dou and Prin Chantarangkul '27 broke the 200-yard medley relay mark set in 2023 by over a second. The quartet posted a combined time of 1:30:77, placing them in seventh overall.

However, this was not the end of the Panther's achievements, with McNamara continuing his record breaking streak. This time the junior swimmer claimed the second fastest preliminary time of 3:58:47 in the 400-yard IM, earning him a spot in the championship final where he claimed runner-up honors with a time of 3:58:49. The impressive run by McNamara bested the program record previously established by Jean-Paul Gowdy in 1999.

When asked about his performance during the whole event, McNamara said that the core of his success lies with his teammates who have been with him during the entire season, motivating him to put in the work by leading by example and always showing up.

"Being on deck with my favorite people gives me the confidence to go above and beyond and do things I have never done before," McNamara said.

Apart from the joy brought by the program's numerous successes, Saturday was also a time of nostalgia and reflection for the graduating seniors. The evening event offered the whole Natatorium an opportunity to celebrate Bigelow, Hensel, Undercofler, Sam Hughes '25, Terry Luongo '25, Jack Paul '25, and Will Sonne '25, and to recognize the meaningful contributions that they each brought to the team.

Sunday was a beautiful wrap to the whole event. Shen broke another program record in the 200-yard breaststroke. In the qualifying heats, he was the only swimmer with a sub-two minute time. In the final, he earned second overall, finishing with the time of 2:01:09. Hughes added to the team's success in the 200-yard backstroke, recording a NCAA 'B' cut time of 1:47:45 in preliminaries, which secured him a spot in the championship final.

The final event of the championship was closed by Masiello, Hughes, Ryan Mauney '26, and Hensel in the 400 free relay where their combined time of 3:03:73 placed them ninth overall.

Reflecting on both the championship and the season, captain Hughes highlighted the team's progress over the past decade.

"The team has been trusting the process, training really hard and putting the work in which resulted in a performance that far exceeded the previous 10-15 years," Hughes said.

Thomas echoed this sentiment.

"NESCAC is one of the fastest and most competitive conferences in Division III so seeing the efforts of the team and the results really feels good," Thomas said.

Looking at the bigger picture of the season, many team members emphasized the collective effort that made their success at the NESCAC Championships possible. McNamara and Wang acknowledge the guidance of coaches Bob Rueppel, Emily Daniels, and Bradley Scott, while Hughes expressed gratitude for the support of the women's team.

Finishing the Championships in sixth place might not be the perfect outcome for the Panthers, but nonetheless it's an enormous achievement. With five school records broken and nearly 150 more points than last year's total, Middlebury's swimmers and divers have set the stage for continued success in the seasons to come.

*Editor's Note: James Thomas '27 is the Communications Director for The Campus. He had no role in the publication of this article.*

COURTESY PHOTO / ALI PAQUETTE

*The men's swimming and diving team gather for a team huddle before the NESCAC championship begins.*